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ABSTRACT

A study of language maintenance and language shift among Asian Indian speakers of Kannada in the New York metropolitan area within the first generation of settlement in the United States examines this issue from a sociolinguistic perspective. The variables examined include the following: (1) proficiency in and respect for the mainstream language prior to immigration; (2) access to the middle- and upper-class social roles soon after arrival; and (3) diversity of languages or regional subcultures within the ethnic group, including differences in intensity of language loyalty. The study also addresses the claim that Indian bilingualism is conducive to maintenance rather than shift. A 55-item questionnaire was administered to 21 families of Kannada speakers, requesting information about demographic details, opportunities for Kannada use in the United States, indicators of rootedness in the ethnic tradition, parents' use of language in different domains, the children's Kannada proficiency, children's use of and attitude toward Kannada in various situations, parents' efforts toward language maintenance, and parents' attitude toward the future of Kannada in the United States. The results are discussed in light of the language maintenance variables examined and compared with the results of similar studies. (MSE)

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LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND LANGUAGE SHIFT AMONG ASIAN INDIANS: KANNADIGAS IN THE NEW YORK AREA

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is a synchronic empirical study of language maintenance and shift from a sociolinguistic perspective. Its synchronicity is necessitated by the fact that the language community under focus--the Kannada-speaking Asian Indians in New York--is one of the post 1965 arrivals in the U.S., sometimes referred to as the "new ethnics" (Saran and Eames 1980), and so cross-generational studies can not yet be made. Making a virtue out of necessity, this study presents a detailed profile of the language situation in the first generation of immigrants that should be useful in future studies of this community. The sociolinguistic perspective permits a finer description of the children's competence in the ethnic language than is usually found in the literature. It also gives insights into the dynamics of bilingual behavior in a variety of speech situations, especially into the nature of the linguistic output available to the younger generation. This study also illustrates the value of the comparativist perspective suggested by Fishman (1966) by relating the sociolinguistic outcomes of different contact situations: Kannadigas in their home state, in Delhi, and in India and New York and other migrant groups in India.

The Asian Indian community in the U.S. offers a good opportunity for the study of the patterns of language use of an

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immigrant community in the first generation of its settlement. Its particular composition allows us to study several potentially important variables in language maintenance. Among these are: (a) proficiency in and respect for the mainstream language prior to immigration; (b) access to the middle and upper middle-class social roles soon after arrival; and (c) diversity of languages and regional sub-cultures within the ethnic group, including differences in intensity of language loyalty. Additionally, it enables us to verify an important claim regarding Indian bilingualism, namely that it is conducive to maintenance rather than shift.

2. ASIAN INDIANS IN THE U.S.

According to the 1980 Census, there are approximately 361,500 Asian Indians in the U.S. Their geographic distribution is as follows: Northeast 120,800; North Central 85,200; South 83,600, and West 72,000. As many as 95,000 live in the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, out of which 27,000 are settled in New York City (mostly in Queens) and Long Island.

They come from all parts of India and include Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Jains, and members of other religions. The largest section of this community are professionals (doctors, engineers, scientists, academics) and a sizeable body are businessmen and enterpreneurs. Their high level of education and proficiency in English and the relative openness of the host society gives them a certain amount of independence and choice in occupation and residence, thus minimizing ghettoization, except in the case of relatively less educated and skilled persons who arrive as relatives of those already

established in this country. They organize themselves primarily on the basis of regional (linguistic) and religious affiliations, although there are also several federations of regional organizations.

Thus, in terms of patterns of adaptation, they are neither totally 'assimilating' (cf. Irish Americans) nor are they 'accomadating' i.e., preserving their ethnic way of life except for minimal adjustments necessary for survival (cf.the Sikhs in the U.K.). Rather, they are 'adapting', i.e., "selectively imitating the traits of the host society while retaining a distinct Asian Indian sub-culture" somewhat like the Indians in Kenya described by Neale (1974:267). This is an oversimplification, of course, but representative, I believe, of general trends.

Given the diversity of the Asian Indian community and the salience of regional languages and cultures as rallying points, it is advisable to study language maintenance and language shift (LMLS hereafter) with reference to specific regional groups, arriving at generalizations inductively. I have chosen to begin my study of LMLS in Asian Indians with speakers of Kannada for two reasons: one, my earlier study of language use by Kannada speakers in two cities in South India (Sridhar 1982) might help me to better interpret Kannada-English bilingualism; second, the existence of a systematic study of LMLS among Kannadigas in Delhi permits a comparison between patterns of language maintenance within and outside India.

The Kannada-speaking community in the New York area

(estimated to comprise of about three to four hundred families) seems to be fairly representative of Asian Indian regional groups (cf. Fisher 1980, Saran and Eames 1980). Kannada is also representative of the 15 major regional or national languages recognized by the Indian constitution. It is the official language of Karnataka, one of the 22 linguistically organized states in India. It is spoken by about 25 million people and has a respected literary tradition dating back to about 9th century. Speakers of Kannada (referred to as Kannadigas by themselves) stand mid-way on the language loyalty scale, between fierce loyalty (eg., Tamils, Bengalis) and self-denigration (e.g., speakers of many tribal languages in India) (Satyanath 1982).

3. THEORETICAL MODEL

The theoretical model adopted in this paper is that of Fishman (1966), which involves three major topical sub-divisions: (a) habitual language use at more than one point in time or space under conditions of intergroup contact; (b) antecedent, concurrent, or consequent psychological, social, and cultural processes and their relationship to stability or change in habitual language use; and (c) behavior toward language in the contact setting, including directed maintenance or shift efforts. Since the topic of LMLS is being studied for the first time here with reference to Asian Indians in the U.S., and since the immigrant group in question has been in existence for a relatively short time (most of them arrived in the U.S. in the last 20 years), comparison across time is obviously not possible. However, comparison across space has been attempted with

reference to Kannadigas in Karnataka, Kannadigas who have migrated to Delhi, and other migrant groups of Indian language speakers.

4. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Methodologically, this study is based on reports of language use, attitudes, socio-cultural practises and maintenance efforts of a randomly selected sample of Kannadigas and on observations of interactions among Kannadigas in various informal and institutional settings.

The main features of the design adopted in the present study are the following: (i) detailed information has been elicited on the use of the ethnic language (Kannada) and the mainstream language (English) in various domains by both parents and children; and (ii) special attention is paid to the degree of proficiency in the mother tongue by children.

The Instrument:

A 55 item questionnaire was administered to 21 families of Kannada speakers. The questionnaire elicited information in the following categories: (a) demographic details; (b) opportunities for the use of Kannada in the U.S. (eg., with relatives, friends, in Kannada gatherings); (c) indicators of rootedness in the ethnic tradition; (d) Parents' use of languages in different domains; (e) the children's proficiency in Kannada; (f) Children's use of and attitude toward Kannada in various situations; (g) Parents' efforts toward language maintenance; and (h) Parents' attitude toward the future of Kannada in the U.S.

This being a pilot study, the respondents were selected

mainly on the basis of their accessibility to the author and their willingness to participate in the study. A small group of friends and acquaintances formed the pre-pilot group on whom the questionnaire was first tried out. They also provided contacts with other families who in turn suggested more potential respondents. Some respondents were approached at a meeting of Kannada Kuta, the cultural organization of Kannadigas in the New York City metropolitan area.

In most cases the author visited the families in their homes and one of the parents--usually the mother--filled out the questionnaire after discussing each item with the family. Since the families, true to the Kannadigas' reputation as a very hospitable people, invariably insisted on the author's having dinner or lunch with them and would not hear of just a business visit, the author was able to observe patterns of language use among the members of the family at close range. Only in a few cases were the data gathered by mail.

Respondents' Background

The 21 families in the sample live in the New York City metropolitan area (11 in Queens, 6 in New Jersey, 1 in the Bronx, 1 in Brooklyn, 2 in other suburbs). They include two single parent families, one headed by a male the other by a female. Thus in the data reported below the term "parents" refers to 20 males and 20 females.

Information on age, education, citizenship, etc., was collected for both husbands and wives. Most of the respondents are in the age group of 31-50 years, with a mean age of 43.5 years for men and 38.5 years for women. The average length of

their stay in the U.S. at the time of the study (May 1985) was 14.9 years for men, 13.7 years for women, and the combined average was 14.8 years. Thus the Kannadiga immigrants are relative newcomers to the U.S. Both men and women are, on the whole, highly educated, with all the men (n=20) possessing professional degrees in medicine (4), engineering (11), and other disciplines (5). Among the women (n=20), 12 have a bachelor's degree, 5 masters' degree and 2 have degrees in medicine. One woman has attended 2 years of college. All the men and women, except 5 housewives, are employed full-time and some of the housewives also work part-time from their homes (eg., as word processors, etc.). Their occupations are as follows: 30% engineers, 15% doctors, 55% other professionals (such as business executives, computer scientists, librarians, civil servants, etc.). Although this information was not elicited through the questionnaire for cultural reasons, their estimated family income is in the range of $30,000 to $150,000, with a mean of about $40,000 — $50,000well above the national median. 80% of the men and women received their high school education (in India) through the English medium and 95% studied through English in college. 89% of them were born in urban or metropolitan centers in India. An identical number of respondents indicated the metropolitan cities of Bangalore, Mysore, Bombay and New Delhi as their last residence in India.

These facts are significant from the point of view of their contribution to the respondents' linguistic repertoire. The respondents' urban background and education through the English

medium is suggestive of a high level of proficiency in English. The fact that in most families both husband and wife are educated, work outside the home suggests the possibility of frequent code-switching between English and the home language, even in informal domains (see Kachru 1978, S.N. Sridhar 1978, Sridhar and Sridhar 1980, K. Sridhar 1982, for discussion). One effect of this code switching pattern is that the the pattern of 'ethnic language at home--English outside' found in traditional immigrant groups may not be as strongly present in the Kannada families. Instead, the children are likely to be exposed to linguistic input that is largely a mixture of English and Kannada.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

5. Opportunities for using Kannada

A group of questions dealt with the types of opportunities available for the use of Kannada. All but one of the families have relatives in the U.S., and many have relatives in the New York area itself. On an average each family has 11 relatives in the U.S., counting each family as one relative. On an average, each family has "about 20-30" families from their native town in the New York area. They also have about 5 to 10 families from their neighborhood in Karnataka, and 15-20 families with shared college backgrounds. This is explained by the fact that as many as 26 out of 38 adults were born in the two big cities in Karnataka, Bangalore and Mysore. (2 did not answer this question.)

Six families (or 26.6%) indicated that they have relatives living with them. The majority of the families (55%) report that their relatives from India visit them about once in 2-3 years.

Another 30% have more frequent visits by relatives. On an average, the relatives stay for 2 to 4 months. Since the presence of a grandparent is often cited as a factor conducive to language maintenance, the respondents were asked a specific question on the length of visits from their parents. Apart from one family in which a parent lives with them and another whose parents have never visited them, for the rest the average length of such visits comes to slightly over 5 months.

Interaction and Socialization Patterns

Data on the presence of friends and relatives is complemented by information on the frequency of interaction among the families. Two families did not respond to the questions on this topic, so the total N is 19 for these questions. About half of the respondents (11 or 57.8%) visit their Kannadiga friends in the area approximately once in 2-3 weeks and the others (8 or 42.1%) once a week.

The Kannadigas' patterns of socialization is instructive for its implications for language maintenance. 42.9% report that they invite mostly Kannadiga visitors to their homes and 66.7% invite mostly Kannadigas but also other Indians. Only 19.5% claim that they invite Kannadigas, other Indians, and Americans--all combined all the time. No one reported inviting mostly Americans to their homes. (Some respondents chose more than one category of response so the percentages do not add up to 100%). The majority of the respondents invite Kannadiga friends once or twice a month (58% and 21.5% respectively). As many as 21.5% entertain Kannadiga friends in their homes more often. These

data indicate that the members of the Kannadiga community keep in close touch with one another and also that they are not highly "assimilated" into the host community.

Maintenance of Ethnic Culture

This lack of assimilation is consistent with other behaviors and attitudes. The Kannadigas are not fond of American sports or entertainment and do not participate actively in local or national politics (although politics is discussed quite frequently in social get-togethers). Their preference is for Indian music, dance, and other forms of entertainment. Their food habits are essentially Indian, although (vegetarian) American food is sometimes consumed for breakfast and lunch. All 21 families report eating only Indian food for dinner. Two thirds of the parents say that their children eat the same food as they do, while the rest say that their children eat both Indian and American food. Slightly more than half (52.4%) of the families "never" cook meals consisting of only American food, while 28.6% claim that they do so occasionally, and 19% rarely. The majority of the families (17 or 89.5%) claimed that they visit the Hindu Temple in Queens (an active center for cultural activities for many of the Asian Indian regional groups) about once in two weeks. Almost all the families attend functions of Kannada Koota, the Kannada cultural organization, with 13 (62%) claiming to attend all the functions, 5 (24%) most of them, and 3 (14%) half of them. Such functions, usually celebrations of native festivals, performances by visiting artists, and picnics, are held approximately once in two weeks in the area, and are well-attended.

Like the first generation of many other immigrant groups before them, the Kannadigas are ambivalent about settling down in their land of emigration. Asked whether they plan to return to India to settle down permanently, 55% answered in the affirmative and 45% were "not sure". No one said no. The citizenship patterns reflect this ambivalence. 45% of the men and 25% of the women have become U.S. citizens. The over all figure is 35%. Since assumption of American citizenship is often the most convenient means of obtaining permanent residential status for immediate relatives, it is not necessarily indicative of a commitment to settle down in the U.S. It is interesting to note that in only two families are both husband and wife U.S. citizens.

Parents' Use of Language

An important aim of the study is to document, in as much detail as possible, the patterns of language use in the first generation of Kannada immigrants. This is useful for two reasons: it wil enable us to fix a realistic point of reference against which the subsequent generations' patterns of maintenance or shift can be measured; it also helps to determine whether language shift begins in the first generation itself, and therefore, the quality of input available to the children in their maintenance efforts.

Several items on the questionnaire focused on the parents' use of Kannada, English, or both in various informal domains. Parents reported that when Kannadiga friends visit them, the conversation is "mostly in Kannada but with a lot of English

mixed in" 57.1% of the time. The other half of the respondents were equally divided between "mostly in Kannada" (23.8%) and "completely in Kannada" (19%). A similar pattern of language use is found in phone conversations as well. 57.1% report that when Kannadiga friends call them on the telephone, they use both English and Kannada, while 42.86% report that they speak mostly in Kannada.

In writing letters to relatives and friends back home, an interesting pattern of language usage emerges. Kannada is the almost exclusive choice of langauge when the addressee is the respondents' mother (93.75%), but English is used quite often in writing to fathers and siblings. English is also the preferred language with friends. But even here, code-switching is prevalent as illustrated below. (The figures represent the number of respondents (N) and do not always add up to 20 because in some cases the respondents either did not complete this question or their parents were deceased, etc).

Parents' Language of Correspondence

Addressee	Kannada	English	Sometimes Kan./ Sometimes Eng.	N
father	56%	25%	19%	16
mother	94%	0%	6%	16
brothers	42%	37%	21%	19
sisters	50%	25%	25%	16
friends	21%	43%	36%	14

The use of Kannada in reading and entertainment is not very impressive. On an average each respondent had read only 2-3 books in the last 2 years, and most of them did not answer the question on Kannada feature magazines or newspapers, probably because they are not available in this country. However, an

impressive 85% subscribe to the new feature magazine, Amerikannada, devoted to promotion of Kannada language and culture in the U.S. As for movies, most respondents report watching Hindi movies, since few Kannada movies are ever screened in this country. About half the respondents report that they watch Kannada movies on VCR's occasionally. Kannada therefore seems to be mainly the language of face to face interaction among friends and relatives in this country. Kannada is also used at the functions organized by Kannada Koota as well as at other informal cultural events such as concerts, dance performances, picnics, etc. Most of the proceedings at formal cultural gatherings are conducted in Kannada (cf. Fisher 1980). However, it is not uncommon to switch over to English while discussing parliamentary procedures and other such official or legal matters. A part of the proceedings is often conducted in English in order to include and encourage participation by children. This was a controversial decision when it was first taken and some members consider this procedure conducive to language shift if not an implicit admission of the inevitability of the shift.

Religion is usually one of the strongest bastions of the ethnic tongue. However, it plays a rather marginal role in the maintenance of Kannada because of the strong dichotomy between ritual and prayer in the Hindu tradition. While the language of formal ritual is Sanskrit, the mother tongue is used for personal prayers, group songs, devotional hymns and expositions of religious or mythological subjects. In the Hindu Temple in N.Y., the language of ritual is Sanskrit, but all the other religious activities are left to the initiative of the individual or

interested groups of people. All of the respondents in the sample are Hindus, most seem to be religious (for example, most homes have a portion of a room designated as "gods' room"), yet few specifically religious gatherings take place in which Kannada is used. The singing of Kannada devotional songs is very popular but this is done as part of frequently held concerts of vocal Karnatic music and has little religious significance. Few traditional bards (narratorsingers of Harikathes) visit this country. Hence religion is marginal to the maintenance of Kannada.

To summarize this section, Kannada is used very much in the family domain, in face to face and telephone interactions among relatives and friends, and at Kannada functions, but it frequently shares this privilege with English. It has, of course, no place in domains such as the workplace and in formal education. Against this background of parental use of Kannada, let us now consider the patterns of the childrens' use of languages.

The Children's Use of Languages

The families in the sample have an average of two children each. The first born is 14.8 years old and the second child is 12.03 years old. 17% of the total of 38 children in the sample were born outside the U.S., and 7 of them came to the U.S. before they were 2 years old. In other words, 28 out of 38 or 73.7% learnt their first language in the U.S.

We have already seen that the parents use a mixture of Kannada and English in interacting with their friends. We will

now look at the children's use of Kannada and English in detail. It is important to keep in mind that the data are based on the parents' report of language used by their children and not on the childrens' own report. The validity of the parents' report was confirmed in several observations by the author, though a more direct study is certainly needed. A distinctive feature of this study is the attempt to present a detailed description of the nature and extent of the children's proficiency in the ethnic language. For this purpose, language proficiency was divided into a number of functional categories including various skills such as speaking, understanding, reading, and writing in specific functional domains. Language dominance was investigated by means of questions on the extent of language mixing and the active or passive nature of the children's competence. First of all, the parents were asked whether their children understood spoken Kannada used in everyday conversations about food, clothing, friends, etc. It was reported that all the children have this ability. With regard to spoken ability, this skill was subdivided into four types of behavior ranging from minimal lexical competence to native-like fluency, with two intermediate categories involving non-concatenated speech and limited conversational ability. Data was gathered for each child for each of these sub-category of skills.

"How well can your children speak Kannada?":

Category of Skill	child 1 (n=21)	child 2 (n=12)	child 3 (n=3)	child 4 (n=1)
a. Basically they speak English but mix a few Kannada words and phrases sometimes	6	3	1	-
b. can answer simple questions in single words or phrases or a sentence, but cannot use several sentences at a stretch	5	5	0	-
c. can carry on a short conversation about their interests, hobbies, etc.	5	4	1	1
d. can speak as well as native speakers from Karnataka	5	-	1	-

It is often observed that the older children in first generation immigrant families are more proficient in the ethnic language than their younger siblings. This claim seems to be supported by the fact that mostly firstborns are claimed to have nativelike competence in the spoken language. There may be several explanations for this. Parents have a greater control over the linguistic input directed at the first born. Also, presence of older siblings whose language is increasingly affected by the mainstream language may make the younger child's control over the ethnic tongue less secure.

The children consistently used more Kannada with their grandparents (who may be sometimes monolingual in Kannada) than with their parents. 85.72% of the respondents reported that this was the case, while the rest said there was no difference.

Other questions dealt with the children's ability to read a

short story and write a letter in Kannada. The majority of the children do not have either skill, although they are slightly better in reading than in writing.

"Can your children read a short story in Kannada"?

Yes 23.8% No 66.7% Some 9.5%

"Can your children write a short letter in Kannada?

Yes 14.28% No 80.96% Some 4.76%

Children's Use of Kannada With Different Interlocutors

A commonly observed phenomenon in intergenerational communication in immigrant settings is that the children often have a receptive knowledge of their parents' language but rely on the mainstream language for active communication. This seems to be true of the Kannada children too. Parents were asked in which language their children answered when they spoke to them in Kannada. The results are as follows:

"When you speak to your children in Kannada, they answer in ___"

Category of Response	child 1 (n=21)	child 2 (n=13)	child 3 (n=3)	child 4 (n=1)
English	5	4		
English but include a few words in Kan.	6	7	3	1
Kannada	10	2		

Note that as many as 26 out of 38 (or 68.6%) children are described as not responding in Kannada. Once again, we note that the older children have a better command of the ethnic language, although the over all pattern is one of preference for English in the spoken domain.

When the families visit Karnataka, which they do once every

3 years on average, the children speak with their relatives and friends using both English and Kannada. (52% of the parents report this.) A third of the parents claim that their children speak mostly in Kannada. Another 29% say that Indian (Kannada) children speak to their children in English. It is interesting that only 9.52% report that their children speak "mostly in English" in this context. (Some parents checked more than one answer.) Apparently, the immigrant children have not shifted completely English.

The litmus test of maintenance is of course the extent of use of the ethnic language by younger generations among themselves. As a background for this question, the parents were asked whether their children got together with other Kannadiga children on their own. 86% replied, "not any more than with other children" and 14% said that their children "preferred the company of Kannadiga children". Not surprisingly, the children's patterns of socialization is more assimilatory than that of their parents. When the Kannada children get together, they almost always (90.48%) use English and seldom (4.76%) Kannada. About half the respondents (47.62%) report that their children sometimes speak Kannada among themselves "sometimes, just a few words". For the younger generation, then, Kannada seems to be mainly an instrument for <u>receiving</u> infromation from the older generation and English is the primary vehicle of active communication among themselves. However, they do have a positive or at least an accepting attitude about being spoken to in Kannada. Asked how the children feel about their talking to them in Kannada, the parents' response was (a) "they don't mind"

(94.7%), (b) "they like it" (26.3%), and (c) "they ask us to speak English" (5.2%). (Some respondents checked both responses (a) and (b), hence the figures add up to more than 100%.)

To summarize this section, the children have a primarily receptive knowledge of Kannada with a very restricted competence in the spoken domain. Very few can read or write. The older children are more proficient than their siblings, and the children use more Kannada with their grandparents and relatives in India, but English is clearly the dominant language for most of them both at home and outside.

Parents' Attitudes and Efforts to Maintain Kannada

The parents seem to be making, or have made in the past, various efforts to maintain Kannada in their homes. Two thirds of the respondents report that they "make a special effort to bring together Kannada speaking friends in [their] home so that [they] can speak Kannada". Only 2 (10%) replied in the negative and 5 (23%) said they did so "sometimes". As already noted, most of them subscribe to Amerikannada, which features regularly lessons in Kannada for children. About half of them enrolled their children in informal Kannada classes offered on weekends at the Hindu temple from time to time. Describing what the children had learnt at the end of these classes, 5 parents said their children could write a few words, 1 said they could recite some poems, and 1 reported that their children could recognize a few words. 5 parents did, however, claim that their children could do all these as well as read a few sentences and write a letter. It is not clear to what extent these abilities are attributable to

these classes (which are run by untrained volunteers, emphasizing rote memorization) as opposed to the parents' initiatives and efforts at home. At any rate, observations indicate that the children's command of Kannada is, on the whole, too feeble to be functional in any meaningful sense.

The parents were also asked to indicate which of a given set of different types of efforts they had made to maintain Kannada in their home. The results are given below. (Since people checked more than one answer, the figures exceed 21.)

"Do you now, or did you at any time, make any effort to maintain Kannada in your home by any of the following means":

	N
using only Kannada at home with your spouse and children	14
insisting that your children use only Kannada at home	4
telling/reading bedtime stories in Kannada	5
teaching children to read Kannada	6
teaching children to write Kannada	5
Other means (Please specify_____).	3

The primary means through which the parents attempt to maintain the language is by using only Kannada at home with their spouse and children. Fully two-thirds of the respondents report this practice. About a third of the parents also seem to try to teach their children to read and write. However, most most parents reported that such efforts are unsuccessful and that after giving them an honest try for an initial period, they themselves fall into using English at an increasing pace.

Asked about their opinion on the future of Kannada in this country, the respondents were unanimous in their choice of the response, "it will be maintained by a small number of people". Interestingly, none of the respondents elected the option "it will disappear in the next generation". When probed further in a subsequent question about the possibility of Kannada not surving

after the present generation, few agreed with that proposition. Close to two-thirds of the people not only felt that "Kannada should be retained and nourished as a vital link to our culture", but also expressed their willingness "to take an active part in an organized effort to preserve and promote the language." More than a third (9) also wished that "our children would learn the language and use it among themselves and when they visit India". No one agreed with either the fatalistic proposition, "It is sad, but there's nothing one can do about it" or the crassly materialistic one, "Kannada serves no practical purpose in this country. So our children would be better off learning languages and skills that are more useful". These responses show a certain amount of ethnic pride and committment to maintenance, and a certain optimism about its future that is not necessarily warranted either by the history of the fate of immigrant languages in the U.S. especially the languages of very small groups or by the actual patterns of the use within their group.

6. COMPARISONS

As Fishman (1966) has observed, the comparative method is central to the identification of variables affecting LMLS. Unfortunately, the current state of research on the maintenance of Indian languages within or outside India does not permit systematic comparisons. Only a handful of empirical studies have been conducted (eg., Subramoniam 1977, Pandit 1978, Agnihotri 1979, Mukherjee 1980, and Satyanath 1982), although a number of interesting claims have been made on the basis of impressionistic observations. In what follows, an attempt will be made to

examine the trends identified in the present study in the light of claims and results of available studies of Indian language maintenance.

It is often claimed that a distinctive feature of bilingualism in India is its stability, i.e., speakers of Indian languages tend to maintain their languages when they live away from the region where it is dominant. Pandit's (1971, cited in Mahapatra 1979:109) statement is representative.

> One of the typical features of multilingualism or bilingualism in India is its stability; despite the high rate of illiteracy and lack of any tradition of formal language teaching in India, the incidence of bilingualism indicates that speakers of different languages stay side by side, in considerable number in rural as well as urban areas, thereby making a sizeable population of each language a bilingual group.

A similar claim is made by Srivastava (1977:74), and Gumperz and Wilson (1971:153-4) and others. The presence of numerous small transplanted communities which preserve their languages, such as the Saurashtrian (Gujarati) silk-weavers in Tamil Nadu, the Konkani Saraswat brahmins in Karnataka are cases in point. Indeed, the co-existence of hundreds of languages over thousands of years in the Indian sub-continent supports this view.

Many explanations have been offered for this phenomenon of maintenance. In addition to "group internal" factors such as maintenance of social ties, kin relationships "a continuous link between the out-of-the-state community and the home-based community," Pandit (1977:9) cites an attribute of the host community, namely the tolerant and pluralistic outlook of the Indian society as a crucial factor.

> In order to settle down among other language speakers, an Indian does not have to give up his language. He is welcome despite his different language; speaking a different language does not make him an alien. The underlying acceptability of an Indian in any cultural setting is symptomatic of cultural identity and homogeneity at a deeper level; it permits retention of identity markers- whether it is language or religion, food habits or dress habits.

Gumperz and Wilson (1971)in their study of a trilingual community in Kupwar (Maharashtra), attribute the maintenance of languages to the local norms and values that require the "ethnic separateness of home life" (p.151) that is, a strict separation between the public and private (intra-kin group) spheres of activity. The crucial question, as Southworth and Apte 1974) rightly point out, is why "ethnic separateness" is so persistent in South Asia as compared to other parts of the world. They note that the groups who have maintained their lingusitic separateness are the for the most part "rather small groups who could be said to have some particular reson for remaining separate", such as prestige (eg., Brahmins), particular occupational identification (eg., goldsmiths, silk-weavers) or enforced separation (eg., in the case of traditional untouchables).

Subramoniam's (1977) study of the maintenance of Telugu by the Chetti community of rope-makers (in Trivandrum, Kerala) and of Tamil by brahmins of Palaghat (Kerala) lists a variety of socio-economic factors that may be interpreted as conducive to the ethnic separateness of home life. His variables include house-bound employment, lack of schooling, intra-community marriage, residential clustering, non-migration, absence of competitiveness, preservation of business secrets (in the case of

Marwaris and Reddys in Trivandrum) and maintenance of caste identity. Nadkarni's (1975) study of Konkani in Karnataka suggests that its maintenance over several centuries by the Saraswat Brahmins may be due to their attitude of "haughty aloofness" from the local Kannada-speaking majority enabled by their prestige as brahmins and economic independence as a "large and leisured class of land holders". He also notes that there is also very little codeswitching in the community.

It is instructive to examine the data on Kannadigas in New York City in the light of the preceding discussion of factors contributing to the maintenance of "the ethnic separateness of home life". As noted earlier, the Kannadigas in New York interact primarily with fellow-Kannadigas and secondarily with other Indians in contexts of socialization and recreation. Their food habits are predominantly Indian. Their cultural affiliations are mainly with Kannada groups. They keep in close touch with each other and with families and friends back home. While these features are suggestive of a relatively mild degree of assimilation, the group also exhibits several characteristics not found in the small communities which remain ethnically separate in India. One is employment outside of home, especially among women. Others are a high level of education, access to highly valued jobs, a strong drive for upward mobility (demonstrated by the fact of emigration itself), absence of residential clustering, and the weak connection between their caste/religion and their language. The most important factor undermining ehtnic separateness is the extensive use of the mainstream language in intra-group transactions even in the home

domain, and the half-hearted adoption of maintenance-conducive practices of language use with children. The Kannadigas in New York, therefore, maintain separateness of home life only to a limited degree. The patterns of language use among them is a part and parcel of their perceptions- and the realities-of their role in their adopted society. The Kannada parents' relaxed or liberal attitude toward the use of English by their children has to do with the socio-psychological make-up of the community. For one thing, the Kannadiga community perceives itself as an economically successful group with a clear possibility of moving upward on the socio-economic scale. Their own success in life and migration to this country and was made possible by their proficiency in the English language and they see that skill as the key to success in their adopted country as well. Also, the Asian Indians in the U.S., unlike their counterparts in Britain or Trinidad, by and large, do not feel discriminated against by the host community. (This is not to say that there are no cases of discrimination. Indeed, there are in the areas of housing, employment, religious freedom, etc. Yet, such incidents are not perceived as a threat warranting withdrawl into an ethnic cocoon). Asian Indians feel that their superior professional skills would make them welcome in the host community and that although their skin color guarantees that they will never blend inconspicuously into the mainstream, they will nevertheless be able to pursue the American dream with minimal interference. This perception of the possibility of upward mobility is clearly a contributing factor in their acceptance and encouragement of

English.

The stability of Indian bilingualism may have been a product of a highly stratified social structure that continued in an essentially unchanged form for several centuries, but with the force of massive social changes sweeping over post-independent India, we may witness patterns of language retention and adoption that may be closer to those found in Western societies. Indeed, recent studies of language use in urban areas do indicate a trend toward shift. Particularly germane to the focus of the present study is a study of LMLS among Kannadigas in Delhi by Satyanath (1982). The Kannadigas in Delhi, like their counterparts in New York, are first generation immigrants, well-educated, middle class and employed in white-collar jobs. Based on a sociolinguistic survey of reported language use, socialization patterns, and language and cultural attitudes by 20 informants, Satyanath found that in Delhi,

> broadly speaking Kannada is the language of intra-group communication; Hindi is the dominant langauge of non-institutional inter-group communication and English is generally used in the institutional domain. It is interesting to see that some Kannadigas use Hindi and English with other Kannadigas even in the home domain.

He goes on to observe that even in the home domain the use of English comes fairly close to the use of Kannada and that among the younger generation the use of Kannada decreases in all domains. He concludes that these results are indicative of a process of language shift rather than maintenance. Mukherjee (1980) reports a similar pattern of incipient shift in favor of the dominant regional language (Hindi) among Panjabis in Delhi, although that group relies less on English and more on Hindi.

The Delhi Bengalis, also studied by Mukherjee, however, show a greater degree of maintenance in intra-group domains. In these same domains, they use more English than the Panjabis, but less than the Kannadigas. Their use of Hindi is the least of the three groups in question. This difference in maintenance patterns seems to be a function of attitudes toward the languages used in the community. The Bengalis seem to be more loyal to their mother tongue and more opposed to Hindi than the Kannadigas. The similarity in the outcomes of language contact situations in Delhi and in New York suggests that stereotypes about Western societies being more conducive to language shift than in India (cf. Sharma 1977 among others) need to be reevaluated to take note of extrageographic variables such as the role of the mainstream language in the migrant's repertoire before and after migration, the migrant community's actual and perceived roles in the new society, and group differences in language loyalty.

7. CONCLUSION

It is necessary to keep in mind the limited scope of this study so as to avoid overgeneralizations. The New York Kannadigas are better organized and take a more active part in cultural activities than their counterparts elsewhere in the U.S. The Kannadigas themselves are only part of the mosaic that constitutes the Asian Indian community in the U.S. The Gujaratis, for example, are not only more numerous but also more diverse in their range of occupations and like the Bengalis and Tamilians display greater language loyalty than the Kannadigas. Only after more extensive and systematic comparative studies have

been done will we be able to tell whether the "new ethnics" will maintain their languages more or differently than the traditional immigrants to the U.S.

FOOTNOTES

1. This study grew out of an NEH seminar on "Language Maintenance and Language Shift Among American Ethnolinguistic Minorities" held under the directorship of Professor Joshua Fishman at Stanford University in the summer of 1984. I am deeply indebted to Professor Fishman for his guidance and support, and to the National Endowment for the Humanities for awarding me a fellowship to participate in the seminar. I am also grateful to all the Kannadigas for their participation in the study and for their hospitality, and to Professors Melvin Reichler, Bette Weidman, and S.N. Sridhar for various kinds of help and encouragement. The responsibility for any errors are my own. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Symposium on Language Maintenance and Language Shift in International Perspective held at Syracuse University, May 1985.

2. Sizeable numbers of Asian Indians have also settled in Trinidad, Guyana, the United Kingdom, Canada, Mauritius, Surinam, Fiji, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Kenya, and South Africa. Although there are many studies of these communities from social science perspectives, there are only a few studies of their language. Most of these deal with the grammatical properties of Hindi used in these groups (eg., Domingue 1971, Moag 1978). Bhatia (1981) and Gambhir (1981) provide detailed sociolinguistic profiles of the Hindi-speaking communities in Trinidad and Guyana respectively.

3. Mahapatra (1979) feels that Pandit "romanticizes" the situationn. He cites several cases of tribal groups abandoning their languages in favor of the dominant regional languages. See also Ekka (1979) and Mohanlal and Dua (1983).

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